

Be a Nurse Officer

in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps



➤ About the Commissioned Corps

The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps protects, promotes, and advances the health and safety of the Nation. With more than 6,000 officers, the Commissioned Corps is one of the Nation's seven uniformed services and resides in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As the world's foremost public health service, it is composed entirely of officers who have been commissioned on the basis of their health-related training.

Commissioned officers deliver ongoing health promotion and disease prevention programs and are called on to provide onsite clinical and public health expertise in times of national emergencies and disasters. A career in the Commissioned Corps offers unlimited opportunities to serve your country while improving the quality of people's lives and making a real difference in public health.

➤ What It Means To Be a Nurse Officer in the Commissioned Corps

Nurse officers in the Commissioned Corps work throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in other Federal agencies and programs, including the following:

- Agency for Health Care Research and Quality
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Department of Homeland Security
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Food and Drug Administration

- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Indian Health Service
- National Institutes of Health
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Nurse officers in the Commissioned Corps:

- Perform traditional clinical services, including inpatient and outpatient care ranging from newborn care to geriatric services, from obstetrics to orthopedics, and from prevention services to chronic care or acute disease management
- Conduct research
- Manage the review and approval of drugs and medical products
- Respond to public health emergencies
- Develop and implement national health policies
- Develop and implement clinical practice guidelines and evidence-based reports on health care
- Coordinate prevention and education efforts on a variety of public health issues
- Develop nursing training and education programs for basic and advanced practice nurses

The focus is on improving clinical care for an entire community of patients. While there is plenty of direct patient care, there are opportunities to work on organized national disease prevention and health promotion programs that can make an impact on disease rates, health disparities, and individual patients' lives.

➤ Pay

Starting base pay and potential bonuses vary depending on the number of years of training and experience, specialty training received, credentials and certifications, geographic location of duty station, and number of dependents, if any. Base pay increases with promotions and years of service. Tax-free compensation is provided for housing and meals. While it is difficult to compare your take-home pay with someone in the private sector, your base pay, in addition to nontaxable income and benefits, provides a competitive compensation package that grows with years of service and promotions. These benefits may include signing bonuses and special pay incentives based on your nursing degrees and your service agreement. The incentives range from \$2,000 to \$40,000 per year for a 4-year service agreement, depending on your qualifications and service commitment. The U.S. Public Health Service also understands the financial burden of nursing school and, in coordination with certain Federal agencies, may offer loan repayment and other educational and family support programs. More information comparing compensation in the Corps to pay in the private sector is available at www.usphs.gov.

➤ Benefits

As an officer in the Commissioned Corps, you will enjoy a camaraderie and sense of common purpose unlike anything you will experience in the private sector, and Commissioned Corps benefits are generous. They include:

- Health care and dental care at no cost
- Thirty days of paid vacation per year
- Paid sick leave
- Paid maternity leave
- Malpractice insurance coverage
- A retirement plan with benefits eligibility beginning after 20 years of service

Many additional benefits are listed at www.usphs.gov. Officers in the Commissioned Corps have opportunities for mobility among government agencies and career advancement in diverse work settings. The Corps

encourages you to expand your knowledge base and grow professionally so that you can effectively deal with the challenges of improving public health. Tuition and long-term training opportunities may be available.

➤ Special Degree and License Requirements

All Commissioned Corps officers must meet several basic qualifications: You must be a U.S. citizen, be less than 44 years of age, and pass a physical examination. To be a nurse officer, you also need a:

- Bachelor's degree or a master's degree (with no qualifying baccalaureate degree) from a nursing program that is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
- Current, unrestricted, and valid nursing license from one of the 50 States; Washington, DC; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; the U.S. Virgin Islands; or Guam
- Passing score on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)

If you just graduated from nursing school and do not yet have a license, you may still apply to the Commissioned Corps. Your call to active duty will occur after you have provided documentation of a current, unrestricted, and valid nursing license.

➤ Join America's Public Health Team

If you are a nursing student or nurse interested in joining the fight for public health, or if you have questions about what we do and how you can make a difference with the Commissioned Corps, we would like to talk to you. For more information, call us at 800-279-1605 or visit our Web site at www.usphs.gov.

